



Akani Simbine and Henricho Bruinjies celebrate their medals in the 100-meter sprint at the Commonwealth Games in Australia. Photo: Twitter

Gold and silver for SA sprinters

'It was my first major final and I so nearly did not get to race it. I qualified as the fastest loser.'

Akani Simbine and Henricho Bruinjies lived "cometh the hour, cometh the men" on Monday afternoon during the 100 metres final of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games when they raced to win the gold and silver medals.

It was an absolute sensational performance in which they managed to totally upset the form book proving that South Africa has truly become a power in international sprinting even when Wayne van Niekerk is injured.

It is the first time that a South African sprinter has won the 100 metres at the Commonwealth Games and the first time an athlete won a silver medal in the short sprint.

Simbine won in 10.03s with Bruinjies second in 10.17s. Pre-race favourite, Jamaican Yohan Blake, finished third in a time of 10.19s. Unfortunately for Blake he had a slight stumble right at the start of his race from which he never was able to recover.

"Humbled," was how Simbine described his feelings after at long last winning a gold medal at a major event.

"My smile should tell the story of how happy I am to win a medal for South Africa. I did today what I knew for a long

time I was capable of doing, and that is to win the gold," said the local star who was fifth at the 2014 Games in Glasgow.

"I got to dedicate my gold medal to my team that believed in my abilities. My coach, Werner Prinsloo, deserves a special mention for all the hard work he has done to ensure that I keep on getting faster. I also got to thank my family for their support," said the athlete, who trains at the Tuks-HPC.

Simbine said he was only focused on racing his own race.

"Not for a moment did I think about what Yohan might do, because I can't control that. I only started to take note of what was happening during the race at about 60 metres. When I could see nobody over the last few metres, I put up my arm in a celebration salute," he concluded.

Bruinjies battled to believe what he had achieved.

"It was my first major final and I so nearly did not get to race it. I qualified as the fastest loser. I only had one race plan

and that was to stick to Akani. I knew if I managed to do so, I would get a good result. It worked," said Bruinjies shortly after the race.

Both sprinters believe that they would win the gold medal for South Africa in the 4x100m relay.



Akani Simbine wins the 100-meter sprint at the Commonwealth Games.